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Subject: "Christ-Life."

PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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"CHRIST-LIFE."

"Christ in you, the hope of glory."—Col. i., 27.

This is the mystery which was hidden, and which was divulged by the apostles. It was Christ in them, in you—not simply the doctrine of Christ in the Godhead; not the doctrine of Christ in history; not the doctrine of Christ in theology; but something very different and far more important. Christ in *you*, the hope of glory (the inspiration and the evidence of your immortal happiness in heaven)—that is the mystery: not a revelation of the structure of the universe; not a revelation of the structure of God's moral government; not a revelation of his providence and of his will thus developed; but in each individual soul the revelation of God in Jesus Christ—to him personally; and by such revelation the confirmation of every highest wish—namely, immortality and blessedness. This was the mystery that was hidden from ages. This was that inspired gospel which Paul did so much to make universal.

The indwelling of the divine Spirit is not a truth peculiar to the Christian dispensation. It was taught also in the old dispensation; and its light reflected upon nations that had no such sacred books as we have. It was not unfamiliar to the educated Oriental nations; we find many traces of the truth that the divine Spirit, in some way, inspheres the human soul, and that there is such a thing as an indwelling of God among men. However, we have a disclosure of this truth in the evangelists—particularly in John—which leaves all other light dim. There Christ speaks of coming to men; of entering into them; of eating with them; of dwelling with

SUNDAY MORNING, March 14, 1875. LESSON: Col. i. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 1344, 907, 882.

them in household relationships. He speaks of their unity with him as indestructible. "I am the vine; ye are the branches; as the branch cannot bring forth fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, so cannot ye except ye abide in me; and because I live, ye shall live also." In other words, your life as spiritual disciples is absolutely dependent upon my spirit life. Thus, mingling together, the spirit of Christ and the spirit of all that believe in him pervade the New Testament.

Now, it is only an inversion of a familiar figure to speak of Christ as born into men. We speak of men as born into Christ. We speak of men as entering into such relationships with God as identify them with him, and unite him and them; and it is but the converse of the same thought to speak of Christ as being born in men. "Christ *in* you"—*born* in you.

Now, of Christ this can mean no physical intrusion. We are not to confuse, nor in any manner to confound, figures with absolute facts. We are not to attempt any such confusion as is most successfully carried out in the Athanasian Creed, where it is undertaken to show that the soul of Christ and the soul of man were compounded and united, and were inseparable, and yet were not identical—that they were both one way and the other, and neither. The attempt is simply audacious for any man to make, to get an exact scientific, philosophical statement of the divine nature, which is in such a sense beyond the reach of the visible that no man is competent to use it architecturally. The most that we can do is to employ analogies, illustrations, intimations; and that, too, with the consciousness that we see through a glass, darkly—that they convey to us knowledge a thousand-fold more precious than the most sacred scientific knowledge, and yet knowledge which must undergo universal transmutation when we stand in Zion and see God as he is. We do not, then, undertake to say that Christ in any literal and personal manner comes into the hearts of men; nor, when we say that Christ is born into the souls of men do we mean that there is an actual entrance of an actual divine nature. It is all figurative; and we mean by it such a moulding of the whole

inward nature of men that one's moral and social faculties will act as Christ's would if his spirit was in the place of ours.

You can conceive of a divine spirit being infused into you—taking your place. You can conceive of your own selves as being under such divine influences that you think, will, and endeavor to do, under all circumstances, what the divine Spirit would if it were in your place. So that, to all intents and purposes, it is *Christ in you.* The expression is figurative of course. It does not mean that there is an actual substitution, and still less does it mean that there is an actual imputation of one thing or another—that there is an absolute literal transfer of the divine will and disposition; it simply points to an imaginary picture which we know teaches an actual fact—namely, that a man may be brought under divine influence so that all his faculties shall be shaped to that mould, so that all his thoughts shall be moved to that inspiration of truth, and so that all his emotions shall flame toward that center, his will being coincident with the divine will.

So Christ is in us, in the sense that we use ourselves *as* Christ would use himself if he were in our place. *Christ in us, the hope of glory.*

This is a sufficient—not definition, but description—of what I mean, to avoid the error of supposing that in any mystical manner there is a transfusion actual. It is simply that the persons themselves, in their condition, come into a state in which they act as Christ would in the same circumstances.

Now, it is a fair use of Scripture and of experience to liken the development of Christ—the historic Christ—on earth, to the development of Christ in the souls of believers. You will, therefore, in the first place, bring to mind the fact that Christ was born a babe, and that, like any other child, he was undeveloped, needing help and care rather than conferring it. When Mary, pondering these things, with a heart as deep as a mother-heart may be, held in her entranced arms the babe Jesus, and believed, or strove to believe, that something of God was there, he still drew life from her bosom. He waked with cries of pain; he could neither

dress himself nor walk forth; and he lay a burden in the arms of love.

When Christ is first born into the souls of men it is not with his crown upon his head, nor with any radiancy of white garments. Often and often—and more often than not—Christ is born into the experiences of men as the *babe* Jesus; your hope needs nourishment at first. It does little for you. It needs everything from you. Your first trembling faith that you are Christ's and that Christ is yours—will not business smother it? Will not joy quench its brightness? You fear society; you look on the right and on the left, and gird yourself on every hand, lest this blessed birth—this babe Jesus, born into your soul—should suffer harm. You care for *it* more than it takes care for *you*.

As one lights a taper on the tip of the wick, and there is a flame just burning, dancing, and not knowing whether to go downward or upward—whether to abide or to go out; so men have kindled in them a hope which they dare not whisper of—the child to the parent, the friend to the friend, the husband and wife or the brother and sister to each other. For days and weeks and months, often, men carry kindled in their bosom a strange spirit-life. They know whence it comes, and yet are not sure. Day by day they watch, they tremble, they almost dread. The babe Jesus is born in them; and although no omnipotence is there disclosed; although in the beginnings, in the first openings of the soul upward, the child Jesus does not reign there, but lies helpless, seemingly, yet in that child is the might of God; and the glory of the kingdom is to spring forth from that sceptered hand which now lies powerless in the mother's arms. The faintest beginning, the smallest aspiration, the slightest yearning which is sincere in the whole soul toward God and heaven—it is the babe Jesus. The hidden tear, the silent cry—they are the tear and the cry of the babe in the night. Better is the weakness of the child Jesus in the human soul prophesying of that which is to come, than would be the pomp and glory of all outward kingdoms.

Next you will recollect how, in the sacred Scripture, Christ is described as growing from a babe to a child, from a

child to a youth, from a youth to a young man, and from a young man to a man grown. Luke speaks of him thus:

"The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him."

Now, this, we will say, is the enlarging of the ideal and the development in Christian experience of one and another of those elements which are Christ-like. The purposes of life growing richer and nobler; the consecration of everything in life; the yearning for things higher rather than for things which shall suit the eye and the senses; the discernment of good from evil; the refinement of our likings and of our loves; not yet the full sense of dominion, but the enlargement of the conception, the opening of the field so that men shall see, in Christian experience, not a barren heath, not the mere following of the church bell, not a perfunctory observance of days and ordinances and services, not a cutting off of this or that performance, not the renunciation of a desired good and the acceptance of an undesired hardship—not these things, as for their own sakes, but the growing sense of spiritual refinement, conscience sweetened by love, affection quickened by hope and the discernment of things nobler than the body can know, and the laying out in one's self, with greater unfolding, a plan of life, a character, and a destiny, such as does not belong to the natural man nor fall within the horizon of the unregenerate race—this is Christ in us, growing in wisdom, and developing in the spirit of God.

Then, to recur again to the historic element, you will recollect how Christ, when developed to manhood, began the work of training his disciples, coming in conflict with their prejudices, seeking to dissipate the darkness that hung over their minds, softening them, filling them with sweeter feelings, teaching them forgiveness and patience under injury, and love for those who hated them, paying out golden coin for lead and for iron on every hand, and raising in the smallest and the humblest the sense that they were crowned benefactors, if only they used their inward force as God uses his, to make men better and the world happier.

As a Teacher he sought not so much to tread under foot

everything that men had known, as to give higher and nobler meaning to old knowledges. He changed routine into vital and vivid reality. He did not despise the synagogue with contemptuous words flung at its dry doors and empty services. On the other hand, he went in and gave to the services, jejune and dry, vitality and power. He did not despise the Sabbath day, but he touched it with a divine finger, and it blazed with the light of humanity and kindness. Instead of being a bondman's day, a slave's day, it became a globe of light to those who were in darkness, and joy to those who were in sorrow, and a relief to those who were trodden down by the hard priest and the severe sanctuary. His ministration among men was to sustain sorrow, and teach them that there is joy therein. He kindled hope and cheer on every side, giving to character a higher ideal, and to life a new mission.

We have the parallel of this in Christian experience, where Christ is born as a child in the soul, and grows in wisdom and in knowledge, enlarging the conceptions of what man is when he comes finally to that power and influence by which he is transformed.

All things are subdued to the reign of Christ. Our prejudices are cleansed. Our appetites and our passions are fully controlled. We are superior to our circumstances. We are no longer to be judged as men who act under the influences that exist around about them, because there is hidden life, and hidden food, and hidden communion; and that of which I spoke in the foregoing stage, and which was but a conception of manhood and of nobility, now begins to be wrought out.

In my orchard, year after year, I went watching for the first blossom. I knew my trees. I knew that here was a Northern Spy, and that there was a Seek-no-further; but all trees are alike before they bear, except to the critical eye of the nurseryman. I went watching year by year, till at last, after six or seven years, I saw some blossoms, and rejoiced, and said, "The time of the fruit appears!" but the trees were not strong enough to do more than bloom, and the blossoms fell away, and no apples came. The next year was an untoward year, and the trees did not even blossom. The next

year they bloomed, and there were clusters of apples—two, five, ten, but so feeble were the trees, and so mighty were the insects, that these apples shrank, and were spotted, or cracked; at all events, they came to no good. I failed thus far to identify my trees, and the only satisfaction I had was that they had come near to the bearing state. Last year, however, I walked under them, and they bowed down their branches. As men bend humbly downward in proportion as they are full of fruit and spiritually rich, so these trees bowed themselves down on every side. The time of the bearing of the fruit had come, and the glory of the year was upon them.

Thus it is with Christian people who begin growing in the wood, striking out branches, and getting ready for blossoms of the higher experiences. These blossoms—their aspirations, their hopes, what they mean to do—come to nothing for a time; but pretty soon there is some little fruit here and there, which is not very good. At last the time of bearing comes, and the tree is full of fruit.

Then comes the last stage. In the terminal periods of our Master's life on earth he instituted a new relationship between himself and his disciples, and said to them, "Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends." He made love to them. And he added this significant phrase: "The servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but the things that the Father hath told me I give to you"—or that which is equivalent. In other words, he came to that state with them in which familiarity of love was to supplant fear, and obedience was no longer to be perfunctory. They were to come into that perfect freedom of relationship with him which can never take place until moral quality becomes automatic or spontaneous. It is a transition in the life of the disciple which is of the last degree of importance; and yet it has scarcely been mentioned or pondered. Henceforth "I call you not my slave [Δοῦλος]; henceforth I call you not my servant, that takes my commands and obeys them because I am his master. Now come to my arms and my bosom. Hereafter ye shall be my intimate friends, and all that I know you shall know. What I think you may know, and think

so too. What I do you may take part in. All the things which belong to the most exalted friendship are mine and yours alike."

This was the highest reach that Christ made upon earth; higher than that was exaltation; and that state of things takes place in the soul in which Christ has been born, first as a babe; then as a prophet—a declarer of truth; then as a law-giver and king, ruling and reigning; and then, at last, as a lover: and there comes a period in the lives of men—it *may* come in the lives of all, and it *does* come in the lives of some—in which they rise into that serene communion with God which transforms their whole experience from bondage to liberty. They are so at one, in will, in feeling, in affection, with God in Christ Jesus, that all their life thereafter is but one splendid development of the joy of the highest friendship which the soul can form; and in the midst of outward trouble they have inward rest; in the midst of persecutions they have perpetual triumph; in the midst of weakness they are strong.

The examples which have come down to us from the old Church of Rome are remarkable in that regard. Many of the noblest men and women that were ever born into life stand in the history and in the shrines of that church; and for such noble natures, so developed and given to the world, we owe that venerable church, notwithstanding its accumulations of error and its corruptions, a debt of gratitude which we cannot pay. And we owe that same debt of gratitude to other churches just as really. From the wilderness and from the despised sects which rose up in the presence of the refined and arrogant and domineering classes, there are some who represent what is the emancipated condition of the human soul when Christ has said to it, "Henceforth I call you not servant, but lover—mine! mine!"

None of us can be called, nor understand the call, until there has been this gradual transfusion and ripening of the Spirit of God, so that that part of the divine nature which is in us becomes so sensitive that we can interpret what is right and what is wrong, that we can recognize good and evil, and that we bear perpetually with us a sense of God

present in us. Then, when once the heavens are his, and the earth is his; when you come to such an association of the divine presence that the morning is the rising of the Sun of Righteousness; when the dews that fall are to us falling from the bosom of our God; when spring is but the opening of God's promises, and every flower breathes fragrance from him; when the summer showers are reminiscences and suggestions of God; when life and death, when health and sickness, when joy and sorrow, when abundance or poverty, when friends or solitude, alike, are all from the hand of God; when there is all the while welling up from the soul confidence, love, hope, so that one says, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him;" when the soul lies in the arms of Jesus as the child lies in the arms of the mother,—oh, then it is that Christ says, and you hear, "Not servants, but friends."

Now, you may put what name you please upon this; you may call it perfectionism, or anything else; I reject your theories and philosophy, but I do not reject the *fact* that there is a possibility of rising to a life where there is no storm that can reach us; where there are no trials; where sorrows and troubles do not come.

In this running parallelism I have sought to lay a foundation, Christian brethren, for some faithful words to you. The effect of such a life in Christ Jesus—of Christ *in you*—ought to show itself, and will show itself if it exist, in the power of being, which it will give to you. Even when the divine nature is diluted and imparted to man, if I may so say, there is something in the development of the higher nature which gives force and power to the whole life. Our ignorance in Christian experience often makes us weaker than we were before, partly because we begin and stop; partly because we follow certain routine courses which are not wise nor well adapted to our want; and partly because the philosophy of the development of the whole soul in power is yet lacking.

When men come into the Christian life they come in with an impression that it is a life which requires them to crucify their bodies; to deny themselves; to put on the harness or

the yoke. To them all these figures contain literal and absolute truth; and yet, characteristically, the Christian life is not a life of bondage, nor of harnesses, nor of yokes. It is true that when men are captives, when they are in prison, when they sit enchained in darkness, then their deliverer must come with mighty battle-axe in hand to break down with thundering blows the door of their dungeon. Under such circumstances, when they are brought out they are squalid, and the first thing that is needed is to tear off the old garments, and cleanse all foulness from the skin and hair; and then, with powerful strokes, the smith must cut off the manacles—and it is done once for all. When they are released, and in their father's house, do you suppose that every day some one must come thundering with battle-axe at the front door, and break in, and haul them out, and take off their clothes, and plunge them into a bath? Is this to go on through life? Are the initial acts by which they were delivered from thrall the characteristics of liberty?

When a man in Algiers has been brought out of slavery (for ye are redeemed of Christ, and redemption by him is fair for this illustration and figure), is he to carry all his life long the special experiences of a slave's life? Suppose he was not bought; suppose he hid himself, and starved for days; suppose he smuggled himself on board of a vessel, and lay concealed under hides or bales, suffering all manner of privation as the price of his liberty, willing to suffer; and suppose, after crossing the Mediterranean, he creeps, more like a reptile than a man, off from the vessel, and is free, is he always to creep as if he were hiding under boxes and bales and all sorts of things, starving and going without liquids? No. That is a good thing to get out of bondage with, but it is a bad thing to live with.

So when men are released from bad habits, from the thrall of the passions, Oh! it needs the storm, it needs the rending of the rocks, as it were, to get them out as the pure gold; but when men once are out, then come in play the characteristics of liberty.

Now, I affirm that Christianity is not tears; nor do tears typify it. It is not thorns. Blessed be that crown of thorns!

It typifies what Christ came for—our ransom; but it does not typify that into which we are redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ. We come out from the devil's possession, and are born into Christ Jesus. As children are born, that thrust their way into life with pangs to the mother and with outcries themselves when first they breathe; so the Spirit, thralled in the womb of darkness and sin and captivity, breaks out with sorrow and tears and cries; but once out it lies sleeping on the bosom of the mother, and there is rest, there is peace, which grows amain, and may thrive to full manhood.

So, then, in all the earlier stages of Christ's life, while the Christ in you is growing, while he is training down the animal, while he is kindling the lights and fires which show you higher living and coming glory, and while there may be more or less of conflict, the characteristic of a true Christian life is liberty, is largeness, is joyfulness, is courage, is songs and rejoicing. The ascetic doctrine of Christianity, while it did a certain good work in a certain poor way, as a type of universal Christianity was a wretched thing.

Sorrow is very much like the acids which they use to make etchings with. They take a plate, and, covering it with a wax film, mark the lines of the picture with a little scratcher through to the copper, and then they pour acid on, and leave it just long enough for it to eat in a little bit, and wash it off; but if they let the acid stand all day and all night, it makes a great black blur, and no picture.

Now, in the spirit life God etches pictures on us, by biting sorrows, here and there; but if we think, "It was sorrow that did me good, it was because I was made sorrowful that I was blessed, and if a man would be a Christian he must be steeped in sorrow," that is letting the picture stand in acid all day and all night, and there will be no picture.

The distinctive peculiarity of the Christian life is that of fighting, and gaining a victory, and rejoicing, fighting again, gaining another victory, and again rejoicing, and so on, the soul rising higher and higher until at last it loses all thought of gaining victories, and comes into communion with the divine Spirit, and enjoys the companionship of God's dear

son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour; so that the life which we live in the flesh, we live by faith of the Son of God. There is power in that. When we have reached this condition, ours is providence; ours is the God-thought; ours is the soul-love of God; ours is that which even the life and death of Christ could not sufficiently typify. For the glory that is to come, the grandeur and the stature of the life which is beyond, and only just waiting for the cloud to break before we inherit it—this not even the Scriptures, not even the gorgeous figures of the Word of God are adequate to bring near to us. It will be better than you ever thought; better than poet ever sang, or prophet ever predicted; better than it ever entered into the heart of man to conceive.

Therefore, if Christ be in you, do not be beggars going about, with ragged cap and disheveled hair and unwashed face, to the doors of the church, asking for a crust of comfort, a little bit of theology, an old bone with some meat on it. The poorest man that lives should feed at the hand of God. He is a child of God. Christ is his. All things are yours,—*all* things,—poor as you are, weak as you are, spotted as you are, and standing in ignorance and with various sin. Notwithstanding your many imperfections, I see resting now over your heads the bright and golden crowns toward which you are growing. Lift yourselves up higher and higher. Not long shall it be, before you, and you, and many of you, shall bear them upon your brows. Ye are the children of God. Be proud. Rejoice. Let no man put you to shame. And above all, O king's sons! do not droop in times of adversity. Do not go drooping and leaning on crutches, and hobbling through the streets of experience, because there is a little touch of sorrow here and there.

What would you think of a soldier—an old soldier, too—running into camp terrified, and saying that he saw a bush shake out there, and he thought there might be somebody behind it? See how the soldier sits upon his steed, when looking over the field where the battle is raging. *Ping*, goes one ball, and *ping* goes another, but he does not know it. Shells are rolling and flying about him, but he does not see nor hear them. He makes his reconnoisance, and quietly rides back;

and if he is asked, "Were you a good mark for the sharp-shooters?" he says he does not know.

How many men think that they are veterans! but when troubles fly about their heads, they say, "Oh, what shall we do!" God calls one of their family, and they say, "Why was I persecuted in this way? Why was I made to suffer?"

When name goes, and friends go, and money goes, and ambition goes, do not let manhood go too. Hold on to that. You can afford to lose friends or money or place if you are the sons of God.

Do you believe that Christ died for you? Do you believe that he speaks of you to-day in the heavenly chambers? Do you believe that you are beloved of God? What else in the name of God do you want? Who can take anything from you, and who can harm you, if he is on your side? If God be for you who can be against you? Have you not a Christ grown in you enough for such confidence and hope of victory?

There is to men only just so much of Christ as they can appropriate. The objective Christ, the universal Christ, is beyond all measuring; but the Christ in you is measurable by your containing power.

No man can go forth and scoop up to weigh or measure that wonderful efflux of light and heat which comes forth from the sun, going every whither, and filling infinite space; it is immeasurable and inconceivable: and yet, to a sick man in his chamber there is only as much light as gets in at his window; or, to a prisoner in a dungeon there is only as much light as comes in through the grating; or, if it is underground, only the few beams that are reflected aslant on the wall, to make it appear how grim and dismal it is. The universe is full of light, but he has very little of it.

Dearly beloved, how much Christ is there in you? Ye that sit in dungeons; ye that sit in dark places; ye that sit in chambers unlighted, to you, too, there is a glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; but you do not appropriate it to yourselves by living faith. How small yet is your Christ Jesus! He is an ungrown babe in you. To you he is not an experience, he is not a Saviour, he is a babe. After so many years,

with such strife, with such discipline, with such ministration from the air above and from the earth beneath, is this all you have—a Christ that is a care and a burden to you, and not a Light, not a Defender, not a Deliverer, not a Prince, not a Saviour?

There are many of you who believe that you have been born again; but try being born once more. If Nicodemus, who thought it strange to be born a second time, had lived in the later ages of the world, he would not have thought it strange to be born even ten times over, when he saw how little came of the first birth!

Now, you need another sense of Christian life. You need another inspiration. You need a higher doctrine of "Christ in you, the hope of glory." How much in you is conformable to Christ? Are your strong, selfish tendencies subdued to Christ? Is the folly that is in you subdued to Christ? How much are your avarice, your pride, and your varied and almost infinitesimal selfishness qualified, transformed, by the spirit and presence of Christ in you? How do you look upon your enemies? When you walk the streets and see loafer boys, and dissipated men, and unsexed women, and all the violence and shamefulness of persons unshamed, do you gather up your garments, and say, "O my soul! go not thou among them," and take yourselves apart? Is it yours to live where there is sin, sickness and dying, and only to get yourselves away from it as quick as you can?

At the time of the battle of Gettysburgh the cemetery had growing in it some peach-trees, and in them sparrows, or other little singing-birds, had made their nests. On the third day, when that charge—of all charges the most hideous and terrible—was to be made, it was preceded by an hour of such bombardment as was never known before nor since on this continent. There was a hail of iron on both sides; and the hills and valleys were searched away beyond. Three or four hundred guns opened their throats at a time. But the moment there was a lull, where some men had lain down and hid themselves, up sprang the birds into the trees where their nests were, and began to sing. In one of the pauses the sweet carol of birds was heard. They could sing

in the midst of the rush of battle and a horrible bewilderment such as never befell their little lives before.

How is it with you? Are you not even as much as a bird? Can not you do what these least endowed creatures could do? Are you one that when the battle rages runs away, abandons the nest, and will not sing?

That great mill, the world, grinding, not the wheat nor the corn, but men and women and little children—do you simply pluck out of it dainties and delicacies, and carry yourselves in this great wilderness of suffering humanity only with the thought, "How shall I reap luxuries out of these things?" Or, is the mind and will of Christ in you? Do you love the poor for Christ's sake? Do you discharge unwelcome duties as unto the Lord? Do you live as seeing him? Does he sleep in your heart and in your house? Is Christ next to you in thought and feeling, and in work—in your every-day service? Is Christ born in you, and has he come to the throne, and does he reign there?

The time is short. Search yourselves—for I cannot search out all the ways of your thoughts, nor all the habits of your lives. The day is coming. It is at hand. The places that know you shall know you no more forever, and that speedily. But, lose what you may, and get what you may, lose not the hope of salvation through Jesus Christ. For no treasure barter away your soul. For no want forget the glory of immortality. For no other love forfeit the love of Him who died for you.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Our Heavenly Father, we rejoice that thou art lifted up above the comprehension of our feebleness; that we are by the attraction of thy whole being enabled to overcome the flesh, and to dwell in the realm to which we are going, and for which we are preparing; and that thou art by every influence developing in us yearnings, needs of thee and of that affluence and that nature of the Spirit which shall fit us to appear in Zion and before God.

We rejoice that thou dost communicate with us—and yet not with the body, save through the world in which we dwell, but with our conscience, and with our faith, and with our hope, and with our love. And with sympathy thou dost communicate, making thyself known not as to the ear, nor as to the eye, nor as to the hand. We know thee by what we feel. We know that thou art present by thy witness of thyself; by thine exaltation of whatever is divine in us; by the awakening in us of all that is noblest, and purest, and sweetest, and most of the kingdom of love.

We rejoice that thus we are not cut off because we are encased in bodily conditions. We rejoice that still the pure in heart shall see God, and that those who are called of the Lord Jesus Christ, and who accept the call, and by faith embrace him, are intimate friends, and know his coming, and are known of him.

So, in the plenitude of the heart's experiences thy kingdom goes up before our rejoicing eye, and we behold day by day the signs and the tokens of thy wonder-working power.

We rejoice, O Lord, that there is no limit, and that thou dost adapt thyself in thy providence and grace to the exigencies of thy servants. In every age thou hast been their refuge. Thou hast been so mighty that the weak things of this world have been mightier than the strong. Yea, things despised, and things that are not, have put to shame the things that are. Thy word, the feeblest of all things among men, smaller than a grain of mustard-seed, hid away and buried as the leaven in the meal—thy word, and the power of thy kingdom, that have nothing for the eye, nor trumpet, nor banner, nor armied host, nor enginery of war, nor any element of force, but that are invisible, so that no man can say of them, Lo, here! or, Lo, there!—thy silence; the stillness of thy Spirit; the feebleness of the atmosphere of the divine nature and life—how they have outlived the ages, and beheld empires rise and fall, and seen altars and palaces go down together! That kingdom whose followers were in caves, in dens, in dungeons; that kingdom that had no power—how mighty is it above all power! As thou thyself art greater than thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers, thy will and thy Spirit have been more mighty than all outward things; and still that Spirit dwells in the earth, moving to and fro, we know not whence nor whither, wonderfully working, bringing forth out of darkness, light; out of tears, joys; and out of groans, songs which no man can number!

We rejoice that thou hast ruled, and that thou art ruling, by means so high that we cannot understand them: not because they

are mysterious of thine accord, but because we are yet inferior, and thou art moving on a higher plane than we have faculties to discern. We see the effect, but the details are beyond our inspection, and we rejoice in it.

And now, O Lord our God, we are not weary of serving thee. We marvel that thou art not weary of serving us, but thou art not. Thou Nurse and Mother of all good, never slumbering nor sleeping, but watching and rocking the world as mothers the cradle; thou, O God of infinite patience and resource of love, why art not thou weary? Why wilt thou carry burdens forever more? Why hast thou caused the generations to march into life as little children, that they might be tended through all weakness to manhood and to final strength? Even so, Father, it hath seemed good in thy sight; but when we shall behold all things stripped away that now hide thee and entomb us; when we shall behold the wonder of that nature which takes upon itself care, and labor, and infinite burden with infinite patience, gentleness against all reproach, and tenderness against all rudeness and cruelty; when we shall know what is thy long-suffering and tender mercy, and what is the love of God which passeth all knowledge now, how adorable wilt thou be to our astonished and enraptured vision; how insignificant will seem those steps by which we climbed to the higher realm, and how foolish will appear those tears which we shed! How little shall we think of our past life, whether of its glory or of its shame, when we shall stand in Zion and before God!

We ask not to be set free from life; we ask not that we may feel that those things which are needful for daily life are vanity and folly; but we do ask that we may be delivered from a servile worshiping of these things—of gold and silver, of honor and of praise. We do not ask to be set free from the joys and amenities of the household, and from all those praises which men seek, and by which life is so much exercised; but we do desire to have them our servants —not to be ourselves in subjection to them. We ask not to be delivered from life; we desire rather to be delivered from the evil which is in life, that we may walk in our various ways and appointed paths, or stand in the places where thou hast put us, bearing in ourselves the spirit of Christ, and seeking those things which are above, at the right hand of God, where Christ is.

Now grant, we beseech of thee, this primal blessing, this chiefest of all blessings, thine inspiration; the breathing of thy soul upon ours, that it may bring forth, as from a quick soil, sweet and pleasant fruits. Grant thy strength to be diffused through our weakness; thy courage through our despondency; and thy hope through our fear. Grant us thy love and sympathy. We pray that thou wilt disclose thyself. How many there are who might walk joyfully, but who never rejoice! How many are forever tremblers who have no need of trembling! How many there are who, if they would look up and behold the loving kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ to their soul, would break forth into rejoicings and shoutings! We pray for all beclouded souls; we pray for all trembling souls; we pray for all doubting and fearing souls; we pray for all enfeebled souls that are

caught in the wilderness, and who can neither see where the sun doth rise and set, nor behold it in its majesty of noonday brightness.

O thou that didst come to open prison doors, and break shackles, and lead forth the bound and set them free, what work is there for thee in our own age, when so many souls are imprisoned! Grant, we beseech of thee, that there may be that most glorious of all release, the liberty of faith, the liberty of love, the liberty of manhood in Christ Jesus, and unobstructed companionship between the souls of men and thy soul.

And so may the kingdom of Heaven descend. So may we with rejoicings, though we look through our tears, shout the coming in of the latter-day glory.

We pray that thou wilt grant that all thy ministering servants may be exalted by the ministration of thy Spirit, and may be enabled to preach the living truth to living souls. We pray that thy Word may be glorified in the fruit which shall spring forth. We pray that all evil may fail and pass away before the uprising and growth of that which is good.

We beseech of thee, O Lord our God, that thou wilt be pleased to remember to-day the wants of those who are in thy presence. Wilt thou to each one address thyself, calling him by name. Thou dost know the distress, the hardness or the softness, the trouble or the joy, the comfort or the pain, which in thy providence hath come to every one; and grant, we pray thee, that each one in his desolateness, in his solitude, in his despondency, or in his bereavements, may have the consoling influence of thy strength. Grant that each one in aspiration, in hope, in gladness, in love gratified, may have that blessing which makes all joy brighter than any part can of itself be. Grant that all who yearn for a higher life, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, may hear thee at their side. Grant that those who are in any manner of infirmity, or who are in any manner oppressed by reason of the truth that is in them, may rejoice when they are pursued and persecuted.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the households that are represented here—the dear children; the growing youth; they that are entering upon manhood and womanhood; those who are standing in the prime of life, and bearing their burdens; and those who are beginning to totter in infirmity toward the end of life. May they all come up in remembrance before thee, and receive the appropriate blessing which their nature and circumstances require.

We pray that thou wilt bless the churches that are around about us. Wilt thou take away from them weakness, and add spiritual strength to them. Baptize thy servants who preach the Gospel with the very spirit of the Gospel, that they may stand before men, representatives of Christ, not in name, but in spirit and in disposition.

Remember our whole nation. Wilt thou bless the President of these United States, and all who are joined in authority with him. We pray that thou wilt bless the Congress, and all Legislatures, and all Courts, Judges, and Magistrates, and the whole people. Wilt

thou be pleased to bless all colleges, and academies, and schools, and all that teach in them. Bless all who write, bless those that edit, and those that publish. May all who stand connected with the distribution of knowledge become themselves inspired of God, that they may do the best things in the highest way.

Grant that the poor may grow strong toward abundance; that the ignorant may become broader in knowledge; that the wicked may cast off the garments of darkness, and begin to put on the garments of light.

And bless not ourselves alone, but all the nations of the earth. We pray that there may be more and more true humanity and unselfish sympathy, and less and less force and suspicion and selfishness. And may thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praise evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon thy truth. How poorly we are able to preach it! How small it seems when we have plucked it, and rubbed it in our hands, that we may eat it! We beseech of thee that thou wilt make our own lives richer. Grant us thoughts deeper and experiences more divine, that we may be able to teach and feed the flock which thou hast put under our charge. We pray for the aged; for those who are in the prime and strength of life; and for the young. We pray for the sorrowing and the weak. We pray for those that are in the wrong or out of the way. We pray for such as need thee. We pray for *all*. O glorify thyself by such an outpouring of divine power upon the souls of men that all shall stand entranced and wonder, and say, Behold, God dwelleth among his people.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

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